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Address: Dr J. Fjeldså & N. Krabbe, Zoologisk Museum, Universitetsparken 15, Copenhagen, 2100, Denmark.

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The type locality of *Anthus brachyurus eludens* Clancey, 1985

by Jack Vincent

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On page 134 of *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 105 P. A. Clancey described *Anthus brachyurus eludens*. Because I personally collected the type specimen when with Admiral Lynes, I may be permitted to establish accurately the type locality which, as Clancey's paper shows, remains in doubt.

Although it all happened more than 50 years ago I have still my daily diary of the 1933-34 *Cisticola* tour, and in it are many details of our journeyings, of the birds collected, and of their habitats. Clancey's paper states that the map coordinates written by Lynes on the type specimen's label are 04°04'S, 20°08'E. I can confirm that these are unfortunately incorrect. They indicate a point which is not only on the north side of the Kasai river, where we did no collecting, but also in dense primary forest where no short-tailed pipit would occur.

On that 4 November 1933 we were nearing the northernmost point of a journey into the (then) Congo's inner basin, made in order to determine the extent to which various *Cisticola* species extended into areas considered to be of primary forest country. Without knowledge of the area it is hard to appreciate how, when travelling from south to north, patches of woodland and open plain keep on occurring. They continue long after a traveller may be confident that the true gallery forest has been reached, and that all the more open country is now behind him.

Admiral Lynes has described the country in some detail in his 1938 paper 'Contribution to the Ornithology of the Southern Congo Basin' in *Rev. Zool. Bot. Afr.* 31, 1. As a matter of history I can certify that the type of *A. b. eludens* was obtained in the very last (northernmost) piece of open country on the route from Tshikapa through Luebo to Port Francqui.

Off and on for 180 miles we had been passing through increasingly large tracts of equatorial forest, but to our astonishment, when at about only 38 miles from Port Francqui (on 3 November 1933), we entered a strip of country which at the time I described as "veritable open moorland". It proved to be no more than about 7 miles long by 1 mile wide, but clearly deserved investigation.

We camped for the night at the plain's edge, and tramped over it the next morning. The only species of *Cisticola* apparently present were the expected *juncidis*, *natalensis*, and *brachyptera*. Accordingly Lynes settled down to do some sketching, whilst I continued to roam the grassland, to ensure nothing important had been overlooked. I wrote at the time that it was an attractive place, with an incredible view from the top of its ridge. Away to the north, over as many miles as the eyes could see on a clear morning, was a dark, unbroken mass of forest. It was evident, in fact, that at last we were at the true edge of the great central Congo block of primary, gallery forest.

Before returning to camp I had collected 2 birds. One was this new pipit, and I collected only the one example; no-one else has ever collected there since. Clancey selected this bird as the type (out of 23 specimens, none of them from the same area), because, as he states, its condition and locality indicated an established breeding area.

The other bird was a lark which in my notebook I jotted down as being "probably *Mirafra africana*". On page 73 of Lynes's already mentioned paper this lark was listed as *Mirafra fasciolata*. But on page 47 of James P. Chapin's 'The Birds of the Belgian Congo', Part 3, 1953, it appears under *Mirafra africana malbranti*.

The point at which the new *Anthus brachyurus eludens* was collected proved to be about 32 miles from Port Francqui, and the correct coordinates for its type locality are 04°22'S, 20°48'E. The nearest point to the collecting

area named on any map was the "Petianga" which Lynes entered on the type specimen's label. But we had passed that small rail halt when still in the forest, shortly before reaching that unexpected area of open ground, for which the correct map coordinates are now supplied.

Address: Col. J. Vincent, Firle, P.O. Box 44, Mooi River, 3300, South Africa.

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Geographical contacts between the taxa of *Centropus* in Zaïre, with the description of a new race

by M. Louette

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Examination of the distribution ranges of *Centropus* spp. on the 'atlas' maps 253 and 254 of Clancey in Snow (ed.) (1978) shows that contacts exist, or may be supposed, between the ranges of the following vicariant taxa in Zaïre: (1) *C. leucogaster* and *C. anselli*; (2) *C. monachus* and *C. cupreicaudus*.

Basing myself mainly on the rich collection from Zaïre in KMMA, I have re-examined these contacts in order to evaluate the taxonomic relationships in these superspecies, and conclude that *neumanni* deserves specific rank and that the formation of a new subspecies in *monachus* is needed. This study became necessary because Irwin (1985) suggested recently a new phylogeny in *Centropus*, dismissing data on geographical contact, but using mainly one morphological character, namely either barring or its absence on the rump feathers and uppertail-coverts. In particular, he concluded that *leucogaster* and *anselli* are "not considered closely related (and) . . . clearly cannot be treated as members of a superspecies" and "the barred rump and uppertail coverts of *C. cupreicaudus* immediately set it apart (from *monachus*)".

In addition, I have examined specimens of *C. senegalensis* and *C. superciliosus* to appreciate subspecies delimitations in Zaïre (see sections C and D below).

A. *C. "leucogaster" neumanni* and *C. anselli*

The 'atlas' map (253) for the superspecies *C. leucogaster* can be accepted as accurate, though with some additions for *anselli* to be made in Congo-Brazzaville (Malbrant & Maclatchy 1949) and one in Kwango (Lippens & Wille 1976). The KBIN, however, has 2 specimens of *neumanni* from Yangambi (0°47'N, 24°28'E), only c. 30 km east from the easternmost *anselli* record (Isangi (0°47'N, 24°11'E): Chapin 1939, specimen 159162 in AMNH). It follows, therefore, from the 'atlas' map and current taxonomy (White 1965) that from west to east this superspecies is composed of the following parapatric taxa, separable into general plumage characteristics:

Colour: white belly, black breast:—

l. leucogaster: from Guinea-Bissau to easternmost Nigeria.

l. efulenensis: western Cameroon, possibly western Gabon (mentioned by Bannerman 1933, but unrecorded by Malbrant & Maclatchy 1949). The situation in Cameroon is given in more detail in Louette (1981).